

P 220721Z APR 96  
FM AMEMBASSY BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5627  
INFO ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS  
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN 000290

DEPT. FOR EAP/PIMBS  
SINGAPORE FOR ARMA  
CINCPAC ALSO FOR FPA - AMB. SALMON

E.O. 12958: 4/19/16  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [BX](#)  
SUBJECT: SULTAN: BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE US "EXCELLENT"

[1](#)1. CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR THERESA A. TULL.  
REASON: 1.5(B) AND (D).

[1](#)2. SUMMARY: DURING MY APRIL 16 FAREWELL CALL, THE SULTAN OF BRUNEI WAS EFFUSIVE IN EXPRESSING HIS SATISFACTION WITH THE "EXCELLENT" STATE OF THE US-BRUNEIAN RELATIONSHIP, AND HIGHLY COMPLIMENTARY ABOUT WHAT HE PERCEIVES TO BE MY ROLE IN CONTRIBUTING TO THIS. HE NOTED HIS PLEASURE AT HIS APEC CONTACTS WITH PRESIDENT CLINTON; I SAID I HOPED THAT THE CANCELLED OSAKA MEETING COULD BE RESCHEDULED FOR MANILA. THE SULTAN REPEATED HIS APPRECIATION OF THE US FORWARD-DEPLOYED PRESENCE IN THE REGION, AND INDICATED SOME CONCERN ABOUT RECENT CHINESE BEHAVIOR.

[1](#)3. I THANKED HIS MAJESTY FOR HIS COOPERATION ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES OF MUTUAL CONCERN, AND ASKED THAT HE CONSIDER AIDING THE BOSNIAN TRAIN AND EQUIP EFFORT. I ALSO THANKED HIM FOR SELECTING THE BLACK HAWK HELICOPTER FOR HIS AIR FORCE, AND PUT IN A WORD ON BEHALF OF THE HARPOON AND SEA SPARROW MISSILE SYSTEMS BEING CONSIDERED FOR BRUNEI'S OFFSHORE PATROL VESSELS. END SUMMARY

[1](#)4. I PAID MY FAREWELL CALL ON SULTAN HASSANAL BOLKIAH APRIL 16. THE SULTAN LAUNCHED OUR DISCUSSION BY EXPRESSING HIS COMPLETE SATISFACTION WITH WHAT HE TERMED THE "VERY EXCELLENT" STATE OF THE US-BRUNEIAN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. HE SAID THAT THE RELATIONSHIP HAD ALWAYS BEEN VERY GOOD, BUT THAT COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES HAD INCREASED MARKEDLY, HE THOUGHT, DURING MY TENURE AS AMBASSADOR. HE THANKED ME FOR WHAT HE PERCEIVED TO BE MY ROLE IN THIS ACHIEVEMENT.

PRAISE FOR PRESIDENT CLINTON  
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[1](#)5. THE SULTAN RECALLED FONDLY HIS PARTICIPATION IN THE BLAKE ISLAND APEC LEADERS MEETING, WHERE HE HAD FIRST MET PRESIDENT CLINTON. HE SAID THAT HE LIKED VERY MUCH THE PRESIDENT'S WARM, INFORMAL MANNER, AND REMEMBERED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD TOLD HIM THAT THE TWO WERE VERY NEARLY THE SAME AGE. HE SAID HE HAD WELCOMED SEEING THE PRESIDENT AGAIN AT THE BOGOR APEC MEETING.

[1](#)6. I TOLD THE SULTAN THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD REGRETTED HAVING TO CANCEL HIS PARTICIPATION AT THE OSAKA APEC MEETING, AND HIS PLANNED BILATERAL MEETING WITH THE SULTAN, FOR WHICH THE LATTER HAD RESCHEDULED HIS TRIP TO OSAKA. THE SULTAN SAID THAT HE COMPLETELY UNDERSTOOD THE REASON FOR THE THIS. I TOLD HIM THAT I HOPED THAT THE TWO WOULD BE ABLE TO RESCHEDULE THE BILATERAL FOR THE MANILA APEC MEETING, BUT



CAUTIONED THAT I COULD NOT BE CERTAIN THAT THLS  
COULD BE ARRANGED.

THE US IS A PROTECTIVE PRESENCE IN THE REGION  
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¶7. THE SULTAN REPEATED HIS PREVIOUSLY STATED  
APPRECIATION FOR THE U.S. FORWARD-DEPLOYED  
MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE REGION, WHICH HE SAID  
KEEPS THE REGION STABLE. HE WELCOMES THE  
PRESENCE OF THE 7TH FLEET IN THE REGION (TWO OF  
WHOSE FRIGATES WILL BE IN BRUNEI APRIL 22-27 FOR  
BILATERAL EXERCISES).

¶8. ON CHINA, THE SULTAN SAID THAT THE RECENT  
CHINESE INTIMIDATION OF TAIWAN HAD BEEN A CAUSE  
FOR CONCERN. HE SAID THAT THE U.S. IS A  
SUPERPOWER, BUT IS WELCOMED AS A HELPFUL  
PRESENCE, IN THE REGION TO PROTECT IT AND  
PROVIDE SECURITY. CHINA IS SOMETIMES A SOURCE  
OF WORRY TO ITS REGIONAL NEIGHBORS, HE SAID. HE  
EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THE U.S. WOULD PROTECT  
TAIWAN IF NEED BE.

COOPERATION ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, BOSNIA  
TRAIN AND EQUIP  
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¶9. I THANKED THE SULTAN FOR HIS HIGH PRAISE OF  
THE STATUS OF THE U.S. RELATIONSHIP, AND CITED  
BRUNEI'S CONTRIBUTION TO THIS, SUCH AS THE  
CONCLUSION OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON  
DEFENSE COOPERATION, AND BRUNEI'S COOPERATION,  
INCLUDING SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS,  
ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES OF MUTUAL CONCERN. I  
SAID THAT MY GOVERNMENT WAS MOST APPRECIATIVE OF  
HIS GOVERNMENT'S HELP ON KEDO, AID TO THE  
PALESTINIANS, AND ON BOSNIA. I WELCOMED  
BRUNEI'S RECENT PLEDGE OF \$8 MILLION TO AID  
REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN BOSNIA. I THEN NOTED  
THE CONTINUING NEED FOR FUNDS TO LAUNCH THE  
IMPORTANT BOSNIAN TRAIN AND EQUIP PROGRAM. I  
SAID THAT I WAS AWARE OF HIS GOVERNMENT'S  
RELUCTANCE TO BREAK WITH TRADITION AND PROVIDE  
MILITARY INSTEAD OF HUMANITARIAN AID, BUT  
SUGGESTED THAT THIS UNIQUE SITUATION MIGHT PROVE  
A WORTHWHILE EXCEPTION TO BRUNEI'S POLICY, AND  
ASKED THAT HE CONSIDER A CONTRIBUTION. HE WAS  
NONCOMMITTAL BUT SAID HE RECOGNIZED THAT THE  
BOSNIAN MUSLIMS NEEDED HELP IN THIS REGARD.

MILITARY SALES EFFORTS  
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¶10. I THANKED THE SULTAN FOR SELECTING  
SIKORSKY'S BLACKHAWK HELICOPTER FOR HIS AIR  
FORCE. HE SAID THAT THE BLACKHAWK WAS POWERFUL,  
HE LIKED FLYING HIS, AND HIS AIR FORCE HAD  
WANTED IT. I THEN MENTIONED THAT TWO U.S.  
MISSILES WERE IN THE RUNNING FOR PLACEMENT, IN  
SEPARATE SYSTEMS, ON BRUNEI'S OFFSHORE PATROL  
VESSELS, THE HARPOON AND THE SEA SPARROW. IN A  
VERY LOW-KEY FASHION, I EXPRESSED THE BELIEF  
THAT THESE BIDDERS WOULD RECEIVE A FAIR HEARING,  
AND THE HOPE THAT THE SYSTEMS WOULD BE  
SELECTED. THE SULTAN WAS NONCOMMITTAL, SAYING  
ONLY THAT A COMMITTEE WAS REVIEWING THESE BIDS  
AND HE HAD NOT YET RECEIVED A RECOMMENDATION.

COMMENT  
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¶11. THE SULTAN WAS OBVIOUSLY SINCERE IN HIS  
SATISFACTION WITH THE STATE OF THE BILATERAL  
RELATIONSHIP, HIS ADMIRATION FOR PRESIDENT  
CLINTON, AND IN HIS CONTINUING APPRECIATION FOR  
THE POSITIVE ROLE THE U.S. MILITARY PLAYS IN THE  
ASIA PACIFIC REGION. HIS APPRECIATION LIKELY



HAS BEEN HEIGHTENED BY HIS ACKNOWLEDGED CONCERN ABOUT CHINA'S RECENT BEHAVIOR.

¶12. CONCERN ABOUT CHINA AND APPRECIATION FOR THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE REGION ARE THEMES WHICH HAVE BEEN REFLECTED IN SEVERAL OF MY FAREWELL CALL DISCUSSIONS WITH SENIOR OFFICIALS. THE APRIL 22-27 BILATERAL NAVAL EXERCISES HERE WITH TWO FRIGATES OF THE 7TH FLEET ARE WELL-TIMED TO PROVIDE WELCOME PHYSICAL EVIDENCE OF THE U.S. PRESENCE. THE BRUNEIANS ARE COOPERATING WHOLEHEARTEDLY IN THE WEEK'S PROGRAM, NOT ONLY IN THE ACTUAL EXERCISES THEMSELVES, BUT IN HOUSING, FEEDING, AND TRANSPORTING A SMALL 7TH FLEET BAND WHICH WILL PERFORM SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE SHIPS' STAY. THIS UNPREDECEDENTED LEVEL OF COOPERATION MAY HAVE BEEN TRIGGERED IN PART BY UNEASE OVER CHINA.

¶13. WE SHOULD NOT TAKE BRUNEI'S COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES FOR GRANTED. THE PERSONAL TOUCH IS MOST IMPORTANT, AND THE SULTAN'S SENSE OF PERSONAL RAPPORT WITH THE PRESIDENT IS GENUINE. THE DECISION LAST YEAR TO SEEK A BILATERAL MEETING BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE SULTAN DURING THE APEC LEADERS' MEETING, TO THANK HIM FOR THIS COOPERATION, WAS A WISE ONE. I RECOMMEND THAT THE BILATERAL MEETING BE RESCHEDULED FOR THE PHILIPPINES' APEC MEETINGS. IT IS NOT ONLY THE POLITE THING TO DO, BUT IT COULD PAY DIVIDENDS IN TERMS OF FUTURE COOPERATION AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL CAUSES SUPPORTED BY THE U.S.

END COMMENT

TULL